

March 6, 2012

Good day Chairman Doyle, Chairman Taborsak and members of the Committee,

My name is Pam Staneski, and I am a founding member of the Milford Prevention Council, its Past President, as well as a former Board of Education Member and Alderman. I am here, along with other Milford Prevention Council members and our Project Coordinator to lend support to the intent of HB5360. First, I applaud your committee and this legislature for the desire to make stronger our message regarding the use of tobacco and drug paraphernalia among our young people. Perhaps the words "drug paraphernalia" are too strong as it is currently not illegal for a minor to purchase rolling papers, blunts, pipes, or bongs even though it is well known that these items are used for drug related purposes. Our youth can purchase these things, clearly for illegal purposes, but cannot buy cigarettes. So, the question is really simple—why, if not able to purchase tobacco products, should they be allowed to buy their by-products?

The intent of HB5360 is a worthy attempt at strengthening and supporting the goal of keeping tobacco and tobacco related "accessories" out of the hands of minors. And, as the language in Section 1 (NEW) is written it partially does just that—however, I think that by including the language in Section 1 dealing with energy drinks and food products that contain melatonin the real message is getting muddled.

(2) energy drinks containing excessively high levels of caffeine, caffeine derivatives, guarana or taurine; (3) products marketed for human consumption containing melatonin in amounts not less than three milligrams per serving

I respectfully ask that this language (cited above) be removed from the bill. Resources are limited for both enforcement and education. While we may all agree that young people and highly caffeinated drinks may not make good bedfellows, if we travel that slippery slope of banning the sale of such drinks to minors based on the level of caffeine then we should also ban the sale of some ice creams, gums, iced coffee and some flavored lollipops to minors.

The Milford Prevention Council has been at the forefront of the effort to curb tobacco and drug use among our youth. We believe that this bill should send a strong message that rolling papers and blunt wraps intended to be used by consumers for the purposes of rolling their own tobacco should not be readily available to children under eighteen (18).

Lastly, regarding the language change concerning alcohol possession in a private dwelling, we fully support the change and see it as strengthening the existing Hosting Law.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pamela Staneski, Milford Prevention Council